

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Approved For Release 2005/07/13 : CIA-RDP78M02660R000800120005-3

15 APR 1976

Mr. John O. Marsh, Jr.
Counsellor to the President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Jack:

I think the points which the President should make in his conversation with the Senate leadership on the problem of an open intelligence budget are these:

1. The Senate Select Committee plans to reveal the total intelligence community budget figure for this year, while recommending that any future intelligence oversight committee also consider making such annual disclosures. Of course, the Select Committee is free to make its recommendations, but we are strongly opposed to a unilateral disclosure of the intelligence budget by the Committee.

2. Disclosure of the intelligence budget could provide our adversaries with significant insight into the nature and scope of our intelligence activities. Publication of a figure would also begin an unravelling process. It would raise debate over what matters were included and what matters were not included in the published total. It would generate demands for explanations which in turn would reveal the component parts of the figure. Publication of budget totals on an annual basis would pose an even more serious problem.

3. In recognition of these considerations, Congress has developed procedures to maintain the secrecy of intelligence budget figures and has on two occasions soundly defeated efforts to disclose such figures. On 4 June 1974 the Senate, by a vote of 55-33, defeated Senator Proxmire's open intelligence budget amendment to the Defense Procurement Authorizations bill. On 1 October 1975 the House, by a vote of 267-147, rejected Representative Giamo's open budget amendment to the Defense Appropriations bill. Also, it appears that the Budget Committee has decided against publishing intelligence budget figures this year. It would ill-behoove Congress to have its collective judgment overturned by a single committee acting independently. This is a serious matter which should be determined at least by the whole Senate.

In addition to raising this matter with the Senate leadership, I think the President might consider discussing this with Senators Church and Tower.

Sincerely,

SIGNED

George Bush
Director

